

**AN ENGAGING ELEMENT USEFUL FOR SECURING OBJECTS,
SUCH AS FOOTWEAR AND OTHER FOOT-RECEIVING DEVICES**

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[61] Engaging elements may be included in foot-receiving devices, such as footwear, bindings, clips, or the like. Such elements may include a bimodal spring member movable between two independent stable positions and an arm that moves in response to the bimodal spring member changing between its stable positions. The engaging elements additionally may include a retaining element extending from the arm and/or an arm/bimodal spring interface that induces changes in position of the arm in response to the bimodal spring member changing its stable position. The bimodal spring member, the arm, the retaining element, and/or the arm/bimodal spring interface may form an integral unit. Additionally, methods of engaging a foot-receiving device with a user's foot are disclosed. Such methods may include: (a) orienting a bimodal spring member in a first stable position to place a foot-engaging portion of the foot-receiving device in a foot-accepting position, and (b) moving the bimodal spring member from the first stable position to a second stable position to move the foot-engaging portion of the foot-receiving device to a foot-engaging position.